



# DHHS In Focus

Our Vision: Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

August/September 2006

## Governor Joins Staff for Caribou Open House

These days, “a day at the office” doesn’t have quite the same meaning for DHHS staff who used to work in Presque Isle and Caribou offices. The two offices have become one, with the new address being 30 Skyway Drive in Caribou.

On July 24, the Governor joined Commissioner Harvey for a visit to the new Caribou space, where they co-hosted an open house attended by staff, providers, clients and business partners.

Formerly a department store, the remodeled space is part of a mall that includes a restaurant, bookstore, a school of cosmetology and a grocery store. With shared parking used by the other businesses in



Governor Baldacci and Marjery Rosenberg, whose family are owners of the Caribou DHHS facility, shown at the open house.

the mall, clients’ confidentiality is much more easily safeguarded.

Any new building is an adjustment for staff and many are enjoying the increased

opportunities to better integrate services. The Office of Child and Family Services and Children's Behavioral Health, for example, have been able to enhance their already close working relationship. Children's Behavioral staff are participating in Family Team Meetings and are consulted regularly regarding possible service connections for children and families. As one of the staff stated, "It's nice to be able to walk across the hall and ask about a child's MaineCare application or the status of a family's child support."

The office location has many staff talking about being more of a team, of enhanced communication, and of the ability to resolve issues more quickly.

## DHHS Cleans Up

This past May, Commissioner Harvey challenged all DHHS Offices to a Spring Cleaning competition. Each office that completed a spring cleaning was eligible for a prize drawing over the course of spring and early summer. As promised, in June, the Commissioner’s Office held a drawing with entries from Machias Child Welfare; Caribou Child & Family Services; Maine CDC Administration; Central Office of Adult Mental Health; Children With Special Needs; the Office of Quality Improvement; the Bangor Office of Integrated Access and Support; and the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, and the winner is:

**Fort Kent Office of Integrated Access and Services**

Check out **page three** for highlights from other offices’ “Grand Manage”, and a feature on the clean-up efforts of the Farmington DHHS office appears on **page four**.

## Meeting The Commissioner's Staff:

# Kirsten Figueroa

## Deputy Commissioner, Finance

*In this ongoing series, we're introducing the staff of the Commissioner's Office. This month we profile Kirsten Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner of Financial Management Services. Key members of her team include: Herb Downs, Director of Audit for Maine Care and Social Services; Robert Boschen, Director, Maine Care Financial Management; Jenny Boyden, Director, Internal Audit; Marc Fecteau, Director, Division of Program Integrity; Elizabeth Hanley, Service Center Director for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS).*

If one looks for common threads in the professional life of Deputy Commissioner Figueroa, hard work, attention to detail, infectious sense of humor and a connection to people immediately come to mind.

Kirsten began as Deputy Commissioner in November, 2005, after spending two years as the Chief Financial Officer of the Dirigo Health Agency. She's been in state government since 1993, beginning as a Bank Examiner for Professional and Financial Regulation. Her self-described 'big break' came when Ed Karass, then Director of the Division of Financial and Personnel Services, Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) hired her to be Deputy Director for the Division.

"He opened the door to a great opportunity," Kirsten said. "I had 40 people reporting to me and basically jumped into the deep end of the management pool. The staff worked hard for me, I worked hard for them and as a result, productivity increased and morale improved. It was a big move and I stayed for several years. It was difficult to leave."

After two years in the Dirigo Health position, she accepted her current position because of its stronger link to finance rather than health policy. "My blood boils for finance," Kirsten said with a lift in her voice. "This really is the dream job for me. I look forward to improving reporting and enhancing communications about our

finances. It's important that when people talk about DHHS finances that someone in the room is from DHHS with the information and backup needed."

When looking at DHHS' major goals as they pertain to finance, Kirsten's world - and the world of those who support her - is about the stewardship of resources. "This is a \$3.3 billion organization with a multitude of programs," she said. "We are reorganizing so that we can accurately report in a timely manner that which we are expected to report. We're managing the information flow in a way that lets people know what we're doing and how we're doing it. The goal is to improve how we communicate what we know, and make it easier for those who have questions to communicate with us."

Kirsten plans to continue the improvement efforts of the DHHS Service Center and is excited about the working relationship with that group. A particular focus is connecting the work of the MaineCare Financial Management Division to that of the Service Center.

"MaineCare accounts for \$2.2 billion of the \$3.3. It's important that program efforts and accounting are integrated as seamlessly as possible." Additionally, Kirsten supports the efforts of the Internal Auditor as well as both the Division of Audit and the Division of Program Integrity. "Auditing is critical for our credibility as stewards."

With the integration of services underway, Kirsten believes it is an exciting time to be rethinking information systems. Integrating financial policies and practices with programs,



Kirsten Figueroa

services and access is a rewarding challenge for her.

Kirsten enjoys sharing the information with those who need it - including giving testimony to the Legislature. "When I'm asked for information, I share what I know and the level of confidence I have in the information; if I don't know, I say that and then I work hard to get the answers."

Kirsten re-iterates that she is not afraid of hard work, and in fact, that may be her trademark. Once a pre-law student at the University of Maine (Orono), her career path turned on a dime after taking one Accounting class. She left UMO and worked full-time in a variety of roles (from Bank Teller to Pharmacy Technician to Dental Assistant) while earning a bachelor's degree at Southern New Hampshire University.

In her spare time, Kirsten enjoys being with her husband, Steve and their 5-year-old son, Sam. She enjoys the trips to Story Land and Funtown, and loves to read, scrapbook, fish, and go boating.

An obvious and engaging trait of Kirsten's is her sense of humor. "I really enjoy making and hearing people laugh. It's good for your soul and helps ease the strain of a tough work environment."



Who knew housekeeping could lead to such fun? Commissioner Harvey draws the winning "Grand Manage" competitor's entry with help from her assistant, Kathy Veilleux.

## Staff Agree: DHHS Spring Cleaning Should Be an "Annual Event"

Yes, it's true. About 25 offices participated statewide in the Commissioner's challenge to staff to do office spring cleaning. First referred to as the **5-S Program** (for Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain), later this big clean up effort was dubbed the "Grand Manage" by our Fort Kent colleagues, who entered and won the drawing and celebrated with a visit from the Commissioner.

Needless to say, there was lots of (positive!) feedback from staff on this Department-wide event. Following are excerpts from messages Commissioner Harvey has received from participating staff:

### **The staff at the HIV/STD/VH Division of Maine CDC said:**

"Commissioner Harvey, kudos for encouraging clean-up times in the various offices. We generally spend part of the day on our personal space and join forces to work on big projects for the other part of the day. We've found our clean-up days to be a practical and revitalizing experience, and usually find a new way to organize something that we hadn't thought of before."

### **From Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Hospital:**

The patients and staff at the Hospital celebrated their annual Spruce Up Day, an event where patients and staff put on their gardening gloves and work side-by-side in the established gardens on grounds, on Friday, June 2nd. Donated flowers arrived around 9 a.m., and at 10 a.m. DDPC volunteers visited the garden sites with a morning snack. The planting continued throughout the morning until everyone took a break for a noontime barbecue. The Bangor Garden Club makes this an annual event by planting the Circle of Senses in Saxl Park.

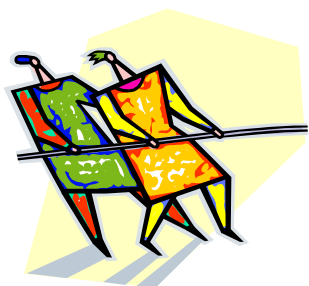


### **Bangor ASPIRE:**

"The ASPIRE Office in Bangor is so much more organized, and not as dusty as before. However, we left our giant Santa head on the wall, but decorated his collar and hat with flowers and an American flag. Thank you for your support of the employees at DHHS."

### **And In Fort Kent:**

Eva Bard from winning Fort Kent reported: "It was actually an awesome fun day which included a luncheon of fried chicken from one of our local markets. The teamwork of the entire unit was heart warming to me as a new supervisor in our unit. Each worked in their personal work space then all worked together in the rest of the area. We placed in storage much equipment (loaded with much dust!) no longer in use and discarded many obsolete forms. Our entire office looks great, smells great and feels great! Positive comments were received from other units, which actually gave them the incentive to each do their own!"





# They're Clean and Lean!



Lots of Farmington staff participated in the Grand Manage this spring. Although some were not available for a photo, those who were are L-R back row: Emily Ladd, Charles Woodbury, Vickie Elliott, Pat Thomas, Candice Harkins, Linda Pressey, Julie Sheloske, Amy Lindholm, Roseanna Abbott, Laura Currier, Kristen Phelps. Front row L-R: Naomi Henderson, Tammy Kendall, Sara Eustis, Judi Sampson, Kelly Howard, Julie Hall, and Kelly's daughter, Natalie Howard, who stopped by for a quick visit.

The Farmington DHHS conducted their Spring Cleaning Day on Friday May 26.

Staff in Farmington were able to transform the five Interview Rooms into more efficient work environments through organization and elimination.

In addition, lots of time was been spent organizing supply areas and updating all forms to display the correct department name, office name, and Commissioner name. Employees worked individually at their own workstations as well as in teams for the larger tasks.

At lunchtime, the group joined together for a pizza party with food and drink provided by their Bottle Redemption Fund and their local "Sunshine Fund". It was a great experience to work together as a team, as well as a gigantic stride toward better organization. The staff summed it up when they said they were happy to participate in this activity.



# Perspectives On Fairness—An Interview with Kimberly Proffitt

*Coordinator of Equal Employment Opportunity at DHHS*

*Kimberly Proffitt is the Department's newest EEO Coordinator. She began her career in human resources while still in college, as a student intern. Over the course of her career she has obtained a law degree as well as worked in human resources in several states. Recently she spoke with a staff writer about her work here and now, and her vision for DHHS.*

## **Q. What does your job as EEO Coordinator at DHHS involve?**

- A. Two things are very high priorities right now. The first is oversight and implementation of the Affirmative Action plan, which is being updated on the statewide level and the Department level as well. A team from DHHS and HR are working on goals and pooling our thoughts and creativity, and reviewing utilization data. The second is compliance with the Resolution Agreement involving Language Access issues.

## **Q. What exactly IS the Affirmative Action Plan?**

- A. It is an action oriented program with specific goals and timetables that gives minorities and women opportunities in areas such as hiring and promotion that they may have missed in the past because of discrimination.

## **Q. Are there federal guidelines telling us what we need in our EEO plan?**

- A. The federal plans don't tell us what specific goals we need in our state plan, but they tell us what we need to look at as we create our own plan for the state and for our Department. It's a big job, especially with the challenges of combining departments, resources, and systems, and then trying to get data, to review what we *do* have in place.

## **Q. And the "Resolution Agreement"?**

- A. We have the language access resolution agreement, which is

very much like a consent decree, except we report to the Federal Office of Civil Rights instead of a Court.

## **Q. How did the language access resolution come about?**

- A. There was a complaint filed against the Department by someone who did not receive services because of a language barrier. As part of the settlement, there was an agreement that we would resolve that problem with specific timeframes and milestones we need to accomplish. Once we do, we report back to the Office of Civil Rights with our progress. We are busy taking on those actions and making sure our non-English speaking customers can understand us and what we have to offer them.

So part of that agreement is verbal access – the ability to communicate in word or writing with our customers. We are educating our staff about their responsibilities to our clients with limited English proficiency. We are teaching clients what steps are being taken to make them at home and help them access services. We've got a long way to go – but we've come a long way.

## **Q. It sounds like there's some overlap with cultural awareness education as well?**

- A. We are working closely with the Office of Multicultural Services in that area also.



Kimberly Proffitt

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(Continued from page 5)

**Q. What tools are available to staff on the front line who encounter a language barrier? Say an English-speaking receptionist is greeting a person and finds herself or himself faced for the first time with a non-English speaking customer – what to do?**

- A. We have several options – we have Language Line, which provides an interpreter 24-7, and we're working on training staff to understand how to communicate to our clients.

But we're also educating our clients to understand how we're trying to make ourselves accessible to them. We provide information to our community network of services and contractors, so any of them who come into contact with our clients or potential clients have a way to tell them how to access services, even though they may not speak English. This resolution agreement encompasses all the language access issues.

**Q. If there was something you wanted to say to our readers, about yourself and what you bring to the job, or what you see for this office in the future, what would you like to say to people?**

- A. Primarily, I think we have a tremendous opportunity to make a difference. We're really sitting on the cusp of being able to implement some good planning for services, and client and employee satisfaction.

**Q. How do our employees become part of that?**

- A. I know Commissioner Harvey has a lot of plans, and I hope that the human resources realm will become a strategic player in helping her realize her plans.

One other thing I'd like to say to everybody is that our human resources—our employees—in this department are our greatest talent pool. That's what our greatest asset is – it's US. We don't have big fancy buildings and a wide array of big fancy systems. We're not manufacturing, or private industry, this is service, so our greatest asset is *us* and how we work together to create a dynamic organization that is moving forward and creating great work. It's up to us.

# Any Questions?

Dear Commissioner:

How does the Department develop it's budget?

John, Augusta

Dear John—

For the upcoming Legislative session, DHHS will be submitting two budgets: one for emergency requests to complete Fiscal Year 2007; the other for the upcoming biennium, Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009.

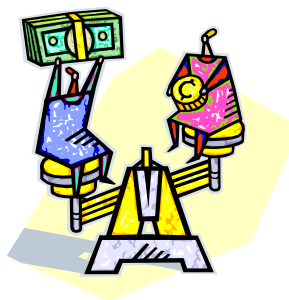


In preparing the FY07 Emergency budget, the Department will request adjustments and refinements to the FY07 budget already authorized by the Legislature rather than to undertake new initiatives.

In preparing the FY08/09 Biennial budget, we will start with flat funding equal to our original FY07 budget. Then I'm meeting with the Office Directors to discuss and understand additional funding needs believed to be critical to ongoing services or to meet a need as a result of program, utilization, or service need changes.

There is a limited pool of overall State resources, so it is important that we look for available resources within the Department. However, when that is not possible, we will move funding requests forward in our discussions as the Governor works to compile the overall budget for State operations for FY08/09.

Thanks for your question!



*If you have a question you'd like the Commissioner to answer in an upcoming issue, e-mail it to [dhhsnewsletter@maine.gov](mailto:dhhsnewsletter@maine.gov)*





# TECHNOLOGY TIP: Searching for E-Mail in Outlook

Ever forget where you stored an important e-mail you want to retrieve? A quick and easy way to find an e-mail in MS Outlook is to use the **Advanced Find** function.

## To Search:

Start by clicking **Start, Search, using Microsoft Outlook**

### 1.

In the **Look For** box, click “messages”;

### 2.

In the **In** box, use the browse button to select the directory you want to search. If you don’t have any idea where the e-mail might be, then click on the top-most box in browse, (usually your name), so that the machine will search your entire Outlook folders.

### 3.

In **Search for the Word**, type in some word you think is in the e-mail.

## Some Tips:

If you think the typed word appears in the subject of the e-mail, select “subject field only” in the **In** box.

If you think the typed word appears in the body of the e-mail, click the down arrow to the right of the **In** box, and click on “subject line and message body” so the machine will search both.

Click **Find Now**—OR, , use the **Advanced Find** Function, like this⇒

## Advanced Search:

### 1.

Click the **From** box, if you’re searching for an e-mail from someone specific, and select the name

### 2.

Click the **To** box, if you’re searching for an e-mail you sent to someone specific, and select the name.

### 3.

Click the **time** box, to put in some time frame of when it was received, when it was sent and specify that time frame in the drop-down box to the right.

### 4.

With this added specificity, click **Find Now**.

If your machine operates on Windows XP, the Explorer Search screens work about the same, but look a bit different than the screens for Windows 2000. You can see the screens for Windows XP in the Muskie courseware at <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/ttg/FileManagement.htm> and clicking on File Management 2003 , and scrolling to page 13, “finding files”.

# Changes In Attitudes—Understanding Addiction

*Editor's Note: Recently, a reader commented that true integration of service will spring from all DHHS workers having a greater awareness of the variety of services we provide. The challenge to learn more about the services we provide is upon us all, and meeting that challenge enables us to speak with one voice, and bring integration to life. To start this series, Mary Henderson of the Office of Substance Abuse, explores the definitions of disability and addiction in relation to substance abuse.*



## Is Addiction a Disability under the ADA or Maine Human Rights Act?

*Imagine you are five months into your recovery from alcoholism and your landlord happens to see you walk into treatment center for an appointment. At the end of the month you receive an eviction notice.*

*Or that you are receiving TANF and are required to work 30 hours per week. However, you need to drive long distances to obtain methadone treatment, making 30 hours of work together with taking care of your children impossible.*

*What if you are working 40 hours per week and need some time off once a week for drug abuse treatment, but your employer says no?*

Protection from discrimination and the ability to obtain reasonable accommodations for absences from work due to substance abuse treatment, or other adjustments that maybe needed in working conditions are important to people with alcoholism or drug addiction. OSA staff have been learning about the rights of people with addiction problems. Fortunately, they are protected.

## What Rules Apply—and When?

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act (covering federally funded entities) apply to government services, businesses serving the public and employment. The Maine Human Rights Act includes protection for people with disabilities in housing as well. In many respects, but not all, state and federal laws are similar.

To be protected under the law, a person must have a disability and must be otherwise qualified for the service they are seeking, with or without reasonable accommodation.

## Addiction is a Disease

Alcohol and drug addiction meet the definition of disability under both state and federal laws. Science has made much progress in identifying genetic factors and the changes to the brain related to addiction. New medications to treat addictions



are being developed. We have recognized for many years that addiction is an illness requiring treatment rather than a character flaw. More recently, the approach to treatment has been compared to that of other chronic diseases – the goal is to keep the damaging symptoms of the illness at bay. But like diabetes, heart disease or many mental health disorders, the disease can flare up and there can be relapse. It is not surprising, then, that addiction is considered a disability.

## The Laws Don't Always Agree

There is a difference between state and federal laws about how severe the disability must be for a person to be protected from discrimination. Under federal law, the ADA requires that a person's impairment must substantially

limit a major life activity— for example, working, walking, eating, or thinking. A different take on the definition recently was adopted by the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. The Court held that under Maine's Human Rights Act, a person's impairment did not have to substantially limit a major life activity, and that the existence of the disability is enough. This ruling is particularly helpful to people with drug or alcohol addiction. Often their experience with discrimination is related more to stigma than to needing a reasonable accommodation.

Does this mean that someone can drink or use drugs on the premises or be intoxicated in violation of a program's or employer's rules? No. They must follow the rules applicable to all employees and it is not considered a reasonable accommodation to permit this type of conduct. A person *currently* using drugs illegally is not protected by the law at all.

Although an alcoholic who continues to drink is protected from discrimination, he or she must still follow the rules applicable to all employees. In the case of a government service, if it is the policy of a government office not to permit people who are clearly intoxicated on the premises, then the policy may, of course, be applied to an alcoholic.







Lots of fresh faces were welcomed at the August session of New Employee Orientation. Below are the names of DHHS staff who are new to the Department, either transferring into a vacant position from another

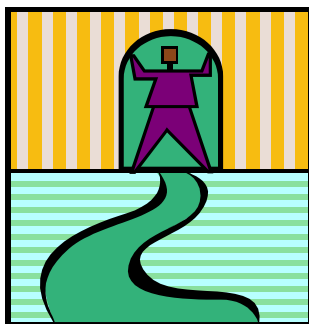
Department, or promoting or transferring within the Department. Whatever way you got here, we welcome you to your new role!

Valerie Aucoin	Dawn Gallagher	Zofia Meffert
Elizabeth Barter	Theresa Giglio	Annette Meserve
Shirley Browne	Nancy Grant	Dorothy Morris
Larry Carbonneau	Merlyn Haines	Joseph Perry
Jean Carson	Lawanda Heath	Amy Robbins
Jessica Cass	Casey Kelley	Angela St. Pierre
Elizabeth Cope	Marjorie Kosalski	Jessica Shiminski
Laurice Cormier	Amanda Lee	Rachel Stecroix
Kim Cornish	Katherine Lepari	Sarah Thompson
Kathryn Danaher	Lynda Martin	Donald Ward Jr.
Clifton Forbes	Judith Matthews	Melissa Winchenbach
Michelle Freeman	Kathleen McCloskey	Donna Wood
Zina Fritze	Linda Meachum	Megan Woodcock

## Best Wishes to Those on a New Path

June and July Retirees Included:

Myra Caron  
Richard Morrow  
Trish Provencher  
Debora McDougall  
Charlene Picard  
Roger Stiles  
Burnell Burnell  
Thomas Coffin  
William Lowenstein  
Virginia Dizon  
Naomi Henderson



Richmond Lewis  
Sheila Hall  
Darlene Sampson  
Colleen Magaw  
Earlene Bryant  
Tonia Haines  
Nancy Troop  
Thomas Hoffman  
Joan Lancaster  
Janice Ellis  
Debra Calderwood

Good luck to our colleagues who are entering retirement!

## Way To Go

~A Message of Appreciation  
from the Commissioner~

As I mentioned in my weekly message to you on July 31, I wanted to share with you the names of some of your colleagues who have received recognition for their efforts to support our offices, our clients and their co-workers, during moves to new office locations.

Caribou and Presque Isle staff recently moved into one new building in Caribou and thanks go to Wayne Morrow, Scott Cates, Lorraine Curtis and Gail Tims for keeping office move activities on schedule, as well as Sharon Sprague for excellent oversight and support of all the regional space projects. David McCrossin and Justin Healey ensured a smooth transition to new technology functions at the new site upon arrival.

In Rockland, Lisa Hall, Holly Stover and Becky Nichols were recognized for their hard work and collaboration on office co-location at an open house in July.

Special thanks go to Martin Smith for creating beautiful artwork in the children's play room.

Thanks to all of you who worked on the moves and office improvement, and to those of you who supported the efforts with your patience and cooperation.

**Brenda**

# Client Success Stories: Nancy Lee Kimball

By Carl Goodwin-Moore

“Enabling adults to read, and in many cases, to successfully obtain their GED, represents a success in which both the learner and the tutor can take enormous pride,” says Beth A. Gifford, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Mid Coast Maine. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, that organization, along with DHHS Individual Support Coordinator Carl Goodwin-Moore, celebrated the accomplishments of learners and tutors, including Nancy Lee Kimball, one of Carl’s proud and successful clients.

Nancy is a learner of the Literacy Volunteers of Mid-Coast Maine who is also a client of the Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities Rockland Office. At the June 15<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting, Nancy was named **Learner of the Year** for both the Literacy Volunteers of Midcoast Maine as well as the *Literacy Volunteers-Maine*. Nancy has been a learner with the Mid-Coast Maine Affiliate for three years and in that short time has gone from a second-grade reading level to a 7.8 Grade reading level.

Also honored was Nancy’s Tutor, Jane Roundy, who was named the Literacy Volunteers of Mid-Coast Maine Tutor of the Year and Literacy Volunteers-Maine

Nancy has been with her Volunteer/Tutor for two years. They meet every Friday. Jane helps Nancy with her reading and math skills. Nancy has joined a book

*“Many of us easily take for granted what our learners are just coming to know-reading bedtime stories, filling out a job application, understanding prescription and medical information-these are all capabilities that enable us to be better parents, friends and community members.”*

Beth Gifford, Exec. Dir. Of  
Literacy Volunteers’ Mid Coast  
Maine

club, something she may not have done without Jane’s help. Jane helps Nancy on her writing skills as well, and now Nancy has started her GED work.

Nancy is also a member of Literacy Volunteers’ Out CAST Players. The players are an image theater group made up of both learners and tutors that has performed for audiences throughout the state, including Governor Baldacci and the First Lady at the State House. The group is involved in creating their own dramatic and poetic material dealing with the consequences of being a non-reader in a literate world,

sharing their pride in their progress and success. Each of the players was recognized for this progress with a certificate of achievement and a small gift from Literacy Volunteers.

Nancy states “I’m glad that they have a program for people to go back to school and to learn things. It helped me to get my reading up to par and to understand so I could start reading books and newspapers.”



**Pride in accomplishment, a joyful thing: Nancy in her Rockland apartment proudly displaying her awards.**